



REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in the application. Claims 17-19 are allowed (assumedly claim 20 is also allowed because it depends from allowed independent claim 19). Claims 7-15 are objected to. Claims 1-6 and 16 are rejected for reasons set forth below.

Claims 1,2,5, and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Lee (US Patent 4,256,229).

Claims 1-6 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Nishikiori, et al., (US Patent 5,704,494).

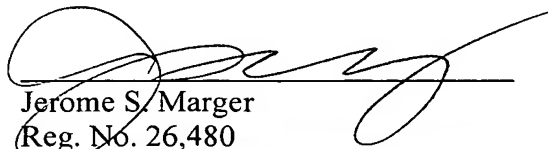
As state above, claims 17-20 are allowed. Claims 7-15 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Examiner has stated that the prior art of record fails to teach or fairly suggest a transfer robot as discussed in claims 7-15.

Claim 1 has been amended to include a transfer robot for loading and/or unloading the wafers to and/or from the guide which the Examiner has stated distinguishes over the prior art of record. Therefore, claim 1 as amended herein is in allowable form.

Claims 7 and 8 have been amended to make the claim language coextensive with amended claim 1. Therefore, since claims 7-15 are now dependent on a base claim which is in allowable form, claim 7-15 are also deemed to be allowable.

For the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance of amended claims 1-20 of the application as amended is solicited. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at (503) 222-3613 if it appears that an interview would be helpful in advancing the case.

Respectfully submitted,
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment; Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450
Date: November 9, 2004



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